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CONSUMERS LOOK-AT POULTRY 1/

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Poultry in the Diet

The meat of poultry is nutritionally important in the diet. It ranks along with the other ham meats as a source of protein and also contains a little of two of the B vitamins. In times of fat shortage, any surplus fat on poultry is highly prized for seasoning other foods. Poultry adds a festive touch to any meal, and chicken or turkey is generally considered as an outstanding item in planning holiday and "company" meals. Cooking poultry with moderate heat is the new scientific rule not only to keep from hardening the protein but to hold in the juice and make more meat to serve on the plate.

Supplies of Poultry

Civilian supplies of poultry will be reduced this year, because military procurement agencies are buying poultry at above normal rate in order to maintain reserve supplies for the armed forces. As a consequence it is estimated that civilian consumption of chicken may drop below the average of 22.7 pounds per person in 1944 to about 20.5 pounds per person in 1945. This is still a higher per capita consumption than the pre-war average. Therefore, in planning meals with poultry, particularly of chicken or turkey, housewives should adopt methods of "stretching" the meat by combining it with rice, noodles or other foods in abundance.

Inspection of Poultry for Condition and Wholesomeness

Although inspection service for dressed poultry is optional with eviscerating plants it has been expanding rapidly due to the fact that certain cities require all eviscerated poultry to be inspected by some official agency prior to sale. Recent advances in quick freezing of this product have made it more widely available to consumers as "ready-to-cook" poultry. Products packed under Federal Inspection Service are labeled, "Inspected and Certified by the U. S. Department of Agriculture." Each plant is numbered and the number appears below the legend on the label, for identification purposes. Federal inspection is done in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture. The inspected product represents a very desirable consumer article since the housewife need not put any extra time or effort on it to prepare it for cooking. The small extra cost to cover the inspection service is more than offset by the advantage of having a product ready for cooking. The inspection is done under the supervision of highly trained veterinarians.

Grading of Poultry

The grading of dressed poultry is also optional and it has also been expanding rapidly, particularly in regard to turkeys. Grading should be distinguished from inspection since it relates only to the determination of grade based on external characteristics and condition. Grading is done in accordance with the Tentative U. S. Standards for Dressed Poultry. Consideration is given to weight, degree of fleshing, fat covering, freedom from deformities, and dressing blemishes such as, torn skin, pinfeathers, external conditions indicating disease, etc. Since grading for consumer use is not compulsory, graded poultry is not found in all stores. More recently some dealers have found it advantageous to sell turkeys on a grade basis, and during the holiday season in normal times graded turkeys could be found in considerable quantities. When

1/ For use as reference material with "A Suggested 6-Point Program For Consumer Study."

poultry products are offered for sale on the basis of official grades, consumers will benefit from being familiar with quality indications as noted on labels, seals, and certificates.

U. S. Grades for Poultry

U. S. Grade A - a very fine product. It is of excellent quality and has a high proportion of edible meat.

U. S. Grade B - a good table product but probably not so well-fleshed as birds in Grade A. Skin may not be free from blemishes and the conformation may not be so desirable, but poultry of this grade is generally acceptable.

U. S. Grade C - less desirable with relatively less meat than birds in the higher grades. Individual birds likely to have blemishes, such as skin tears, pinfeathers, bruises and conformation.

Turkeys are graded U. S. Grade A; U. S. Grade B; and U. S. Grade C.

When You Buy Poultry

Look for inspection and grade labels. Look for birds with well-fleshed breasts and drumsticks and with an appearance of plumpness. A bird with a short body, broad through the breast, yields more meat than does a long narrow bird of the same weight. If you are looking for a fine roasting bird, be sure that its skin is clear and that it has few pinfeathers. A Grade B or Grade C bird may serve your purpose as well as Grade A, if appearance is not a big factor.

Learn to select broilers, fryers, roasters, and stewers with a view of your need and study methods of preparing the lower-cost birds. They are nutritious and will save you money.

Don't pay extra for having chickens drawn. OPA rules require that birds sold as drawn poultry be drawn without additional charge.

Watch the ceiling prices.

Make your choice of hen or tom turkey on the basis of the size you need. Buy a hen turkey if you want a bird about 8 to 15 pounds or a tom if you need a bird of about 18 to 25 pounds.

Note the breast bone of the turkey, if the tip of the bone is flexible, you can be sure that the bird is young and right for roasting purposes.

Home Storage of Dressed Fowls

Keep dressed fowls in cold section of the refrigerator until cooking time.

Remove the giblets and wrap them in waxed paper or put them in a separate dish--do not leave them inside the dressed bird.

Remove feet and head if you store birds before they are drawn.

Wipe the bird dry before putting it in the refrigerator.

Do not salt any poultry before refrigerating it.

Compare prices of whole chicken with those for chicken sold by the piece. It may pay you to buy breasts, legs, or wings if you need only a few pieces.